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by Liz Robb

Recipe: Aubergine and Goats Cheese Bake

Ingredients

1 small onion
2 cloves of garlic
Olive oil
600g canned chopped tomatoes
A pinch of sugar
Salt and black pepper
A few sprigs of fresh basil
25g butter
2 tablespoons of plain flour
250–300ml semi skimmed milk
50g mature cheddar cheese
Half a teaspoon of english mustard
2 large aubergines
3 large ripe tomatoes
150g goats cheese
Servings
4
Person

Preparation

- 1 Peel the onion and the garlic and chop both very finely. Grate the cheese.
- 2 To make the tomato sauce, gently sauté the onion and garlic in 2 tablespoons of olive oil for 5 minutes, then add the chopped tomatoes and the sugar. Simmer for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- 3 Blend the sauce, season to taste with salt and black pepper, and stir in a handful of chopped basil leaves just before adding to the dish.
- 4 Meanwhile, make the cheese sauce. Chop the butter into small pieces and melt in a saucepan, then gradually stir in the flour. Add 250ml milk a little at a time, stirring constantly to make a smooth sauce.
- 5 Add the grated cheese and mustard, stir well and cook gently for a few minutes. Season the cheese sauce with salt and black pepper and adjust the thickness if necessary by adding more milk.
- 6 Preheat the oven to 180 degrees, 160 degrees fan oven and heat the grill. Lightly butter a baking dish.
- 7 Cut the aubergines into fairly thin slices, brush with olive oil, season with salt and black pepper and put under the grill for about 3 minutes. Turn them over, brush with oil again and grill for a further 2–3 minutes.
- 8 Slice the tomatoes very thinly. Cut the goats cheese into thin slices too.
- 9 Spoon a third of the sauce into the bottom of the dish, cover with a third of the aubergine then a third of the sliced tomatoes. Repeat these layers twice more. Spoon the cheese sauce all over the top then finish with a layer of goats cheese.
- 10 Bake for about 35 minutes, or until the topping is golden brown.

Cooks Note

A delicious autumn supper dish, with layers of soft aubergine, ripe tomatoes, thick herby tomato sauce and creamy cheese sauce topped with tangy goats cheese. Serve with a simple fresh green salad.

Some goats cheeses are hard to slice; don't worry, just crumble it on instead. Home made

tomato sauce can easily be made in advance or, if you're really short of time, you could buy a ready made sauce.

I usually grill or bake aubergine to reduce the amount of oil I use, but you can pan fry it if you prefer; it does taste good! I like to use basil in this dish but you could use other herbs instead, such as thyme or rosemary. Remember to choose appropriate cheeses if cooking for vegetarians.
